



EmployeeUPDATE

Our Mission: To serve the people of North Carolina by enabling individuals, families and communities to be healthy and secure, and to achieve social and economic well-being.

A monthly publication for employees of the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services

Eastern N.C. School for the Deaf opens Independent Living Center

On Feb. 20, a process that began in 1999 came to fruition as the Eastern North Carolina School for the Deaf dedicated its newly renovated Independent Living Center. On hand for the ceremony was Jackie Sheppard, assistant secretary of DHHS; Dr. Dwight Pearson, superintendent of the Office of Educational Services; Sen. A.B. Swindell and Rep. Joe Tolson. Dr. Reginald Redding, director of the school, presided over the ceremony in Massey Auditorium.



The newly renovated ENCSD Independent Living Center

Afterwards, the program shifted to the entrance of the Independent Living Center, where representatives from the student government took part. Student Body President James Brown cut the ribbon while a crowd of students and staff looked on.

Upon entering the building, visitors were amazed at the transformation and impressed with amenities that were made available for the students. Many shared stories about the state of the

building before the renovation took place and talked how different it had become.

The center has a total of 12 units - five on the first floor, which will house female students, and seven on the second housing male students. Ten units come furnished with two bedrooms and two units are one-bedroom. All include a bath and a fully functional kitchen

with convection oven. On each floor is a communal area for lounging and watching television, as well as washers and dryers for student use. Also, on the first floor is a teaching kitchen with an adjoining classroom.

The facility is equipped with security measures to ensure students' safety, including a doorbell that alerts a staff member to view a monitor to see who

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April is Public Health Month

April is Public Health Month in North Carolina. The goal of Public Health Month is to increase North Carolinians' awareness of the need for public health and its effect on quality of life.

The state has had a public health system for 128 years. There are 86 local health departments providing services to all residents of the state's 100 counties. Many of the departments conduct activities such as health fairs, tours and media interviews to celebrate public health month in their communities.

Nationally, the American Public Health Association celebrates Public Health Week in early April, centering on a theme of importance to the public's health. This year, National Public Health Week is April 7 - 13. The theme is "Climate Change: Our Health in the Balance."

Often, people think of public health as the agency in the community that conducts restaurant sanitation inspections, ensures safe drinking water, or provides vaccines for school children. However, local public health departments work to

improve the health and well-being of the whole community by controlling and eliminating infectious diseases, promoting healthy lifestyle practices, and preparing for natural or man-made emergencies.

Public health successes are everywhere. Since 1986, the percent of fifth grade children with preventive dental sealants has *increased* from 28 percent to 42 percent in North Carolina. Since 1990, there has been a 23.58 percent decline in total infant mortality, and a 40.1 percent decline in total adolescent

pregnancies. Since 2000, there has been a 48 percent decline in early syphilis infections, a 16 percent decline in heart disease deaths, and a 22 percent decline in stroke deaths. These and many other improvements in health are due in large part to public health efforts.

To learn about what public health does for you, or to find out more Public Health Month in North Carolina, go to www.ncpublichealth.com. For more information on National Public Health Week, go to www.nphw.org/nphw08. ■



N.C. Public Health Month

April 2008

Volunteer steps down after 39 years

Mary Lib Phipps began volunteering at Dorothea Dix Hospital with her husband Bob in 1969. They began by pushing a canteen cart through the patient wards, offering snacks at wholesale prices. She was active in the Dix Guild, serving in various positions. Mary Lib organized the monthly patient activity party for years. She recently ended her volunteer service as court assistant for Dorothea Dix District Court. At a celebration of her service, attorneys and judges were among her well-wishers. ■



Celebrants, left to right, are District Court Judge Jane Gray, Mary Lib Phipps, District Judge Kristin Ruth, and retired judge Joy Hamilton.

Eastern NC School cont. from page 1

is at the door before they press a button to unlock the door. Inside, accessible equipment, such as doorbells with flashing lights, alert the occupant that someone is there.

The seniors are excited about moving into the Independent Living Center. As they open the door to new accommodations, they also open a door to new opportunities and possibilities. It is within this facility that a great portion of life skills will be taught. A goal of ENCSD is to fully equip each student to be prepared to meet the academic and life skill challenges that they will face upon graduation. This newly renovated facility will positively impact the lives of students today and in the future. ■



Student Body President James Brown and other student examine the new laundry equipment during a tour of the new center.

Caswell artist's portraits on exhibit at community arts center

A teacher for the past 26 years at Caswell Developmental Center, Elaine Dawson has never had formal art training.

Ask her and she will tell you it's just an interest that she turned into a hobby. A few years ago, working from photos of men living on Caswell's campus, she began creating sketches using pencil and charcoal.

"For years, Elaine has worked one-on-one with our clients," said John Donaldson, home manager of the Tapp building, where the men live. "She knows them, and it really shows in these portraits. They look just like our guys."

This labor of love produced 12 portraits, which are on exhibit at the Community Council for the Arts in recognition of National Mental Retardation Month.

Dawson's portraits are hanging in one of the second-floor galleries during the Art Center's 27th Annual National Juried Exhibition, March 11 through April 19. Juried artwork is on display in the Hampton Gallery on the first floor.



Caswell Center artist Elaine Dawson with one of 12 portraits on display at the Community Council for the Arts in Kinston during March and April. The resident's portrait appears with permission.

"For the past 10 years, we have recognized National Mental Retardation Month by partnering with Caswell Center in displaying Perske prints as well as artwork created by Caswell individuals," said Sandy Landis, executive director for the Lenoir County Community Council for the Arts. "This year is especially endearing to us as we discovered a visual artist who has honored Caswell residents through her own charcoal and pencil drawings," she said. ■

*By Sherri Sharf, Caswell Developmental Center
Media and Development Specialist*

Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services seeks public input for VR plan

The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services (VR) is seeking public input to help develop a new "North Carolina Vocational Rehabilitation State Plan" for the delivery of its services. The plan, updated annually, will become effective Oct. 1.

Cities and dates of the six public meetings are: Asheville, April 28; Charlotte, April 29; Fayetteville, May 1; Goldsboro, April 23; Raleigh, May 5; and Wilmington, April 24.

Those who may find the meetings of particular interest are people who receive VR services and their families, individuals who work in human services programs or advocacy groups for people with disabilities, and employers.

The topics of discussion may include, but are not limited to:

- ✓ Strategies to improve outreach to minority populations and individuals with the most significant disabilities.
- ✓ Priorities that individuals with disabilities would like the public VR program to address.
- ✓ Eliminating barriers to participation of individuals with disabilities in the VR program and the state's supported employment program.
- ✓ The responsiveness of VR services to its consumers.
- ✓ Improving in-school transition services to individuals with disabilities.

The scheduled locations are accessible to people with disabilities. Attendees may register to speak upon arrival at the meetings or in advance by calling Paula Jones at (919) 855-3533. Speakers are encouraged to bring a written copy of their comments.

People who are unable to attend one of the meetings may provide input by sending written comments by June 2. The comments should be addressed to: Phil Protz, 2801 Mail Service Center, Raleigh, NC 27699-2801, Attn: Planning Unit-State Plan Comments. Comments may also be e-mailed to dvr.stateplan@ncmail.net or faxed to State Plan Comments at (919) 715-1050.

Sign-language interpreters will be available at the meetings. Attendees who require other language interpreters or other accommodations are asked to make their request to Paula Jones at (919) 855-3533 by April 4.

For additional information, contact Protz at (919) 855-3567 or e-mail Phil.Protz@ncmail.net. The 2008 State Plan may be viewed online at <http://dvr.dhhs.state.nc.us/DVR/stateplans/stateplan.htm>. ■

Meeting Schedule:

April 23

5:30 p.m. to 7 p.m., **Goldsboro** area public meeting: VR Eastern Regional Training Facility, Conference Room, 902 Corporate Drive, Goldsboro. Contact phone: 919-731-7956.

April 24

5:30 p.m. to 7 p.m., **Wilmington** area public meeting: Wilmington VR Unit Office, Conference Room, 3340 Jaeckle Drive, Suite 201, Wilmington. Contact phone: 910-251-5710.

April 28

5:30 p.m. to 7 p.m., **Asheville** area public meeting: Asheville VR Unit Office, Conference Room, 8 Barbetta Drive, Asheville. Contact phone: 828-670-3377.

April 29

5:30 p.m. to 7 p.m., **Charlotte** area public meeting: Charlotte VR Unit Office, Conference Room, 5501 Executive Center Drive, Suite 101, Charlotte. Contact phone: 704-568-8804.

May 1

5:30 p.m. to 7 p.m., **Fayetteville** area public meeting: Fayetteville VR Unit Office, Conference Room, 1200 Fairmont Court, Fayetteville. Contact phone: 910-486-1101.

May 5

5:30 p.m. to 7 p.m., **Raleigh** area public meeting: VR State (Central) Office, Conference Room 1st Floor, 805 Ruggles Drive on the Dorothea Dix Campus in Raleigh. Contact phone: 919-855-3500.

Third LeadershipDHHS class graduates

The third class of LeadershipDHHS completed its six-month program with graduation ceremonies on March 25 at the Healing Place on the campus of Dorothea Dix Hospital in Raleigh.

DHHS Secretary Dempsey Benton met with the graduates early in the day to congratulate them and present their certificates. In his remarks, he emphasized the importance of building decision makers and future leadership so that DHHS can continue to effectively serve the people of North Carolina.

The class was divided into five project teams. Over the course of the morning, each presented its work to classmates, DHHS Deputy Secretary Dan Stewart, Assistant Secretary for Long-Term Care and Family Services Jackie Sheppard, several division directors and other DHHS senior leadership.

After the presentations, Stewart urged the graduates to take full advantage of the networking opportunities that participation in the class provided. He said class participants and the department benefit from the connections that are made.

Team projects included an examination and comparison of state government



LeadershipDHHS Class of '08

and private sector business human resource practices, licensing and monitoring practices, workforce generational issues, maintaining the workforce, and determining the level of conservation and/or recycling efforts throughout DHHS.

Team projects and teammates:

Perspectives on human resource practices in the private sector: bj Avent-Farmer, Division of Child Development; Cindy DePorter, Division of Health Service Regulation; Lena Klemper, Division of Mental Health, Developmental Disabilities and Substance Abuse Services; and Lisa Hemstreet, Division of Public Health.

Feasibility of centralizing DHHS licensing and inspections: Jim Jarrard, DMH/DD/SAS; Kim Koehler, Office of the Controller; Tammy Norville, Of-

fice of Rural Health; and Susan Ryan, Division of Medical Assistance.

The impact of generational differences in the work place: Laura Cockman, Division of Aging and Adult Services; Kelly Crowley, DMH/DD/SAS; Amanda Fuller, DPH; Kris Horton, DMA; and Joan Wofford, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services.

Employee attraction and retention surveys: Wendi McDaniel, MH/DD/SAS; Chris Midgette, Division of Human Resources; Brenda Porter, DAAS; Larry Schlesinger, Division of Services for the Blind; and Regina Watkins, DCD.

The green initiative: How green is your office? Gwen Brown, CDC; Allison Owen, ORH; Lisa Presson, DVRS/Disability Determination Services; Kathy Rhoades, Office of Education Services; Jackie Godlock, DVRS.

Congratulations, graduates!

More on LeadershipDHHS, page 7

DDS and staff member receive recognition

The N.C. Office of Disability Determination Services and Ann Griffin Hall, a DDS employee, have been recognized for exemplary performance during 2007 by the federal Office of Disability Determination.

The DDS office received a Commissioner's Citation for work accomplishments. The citation is "for exemplary performance in accuracy, timeliness and productivity in providing exceptional service to the disabled citizens of North Carolina."

North Carolina, Mississippi and South Carolina received the recognition in the Southeast. The awards are based on national performance data as determined by the Office of Disability Determination.

"This award is quite an honor," said Rhonda Currie, chief of the state office. "These awards are not solicited, so it is a tremendous recognition for our staff."

Hall, a professional relations officer in the state DDS office, is a recipient of the Associate Commissioner's Citation in recognition of compassionate, exemplary service and superior professionalism in the execution of job responsibilities.

Hall has served since 2005 as the state DDS representative for the Homeless Outreach Projects and Evaluation initiative, working to improve access to benefits by the homeless. ■



Ann Hall

LeadershipDHHS Class of '09

Information about the fourth session of LeadershipDHHS will be distributed to all division and office directors in June. Potential participants are identified at the division or the office level and submitted for final review by the department's Work Force Planning Committee. Selected applicants are notified in the summer; the sessions begin in September or October. Sessions include individual communications assessments, team project work, and numerous presentations on issues of importance to the department. Sessions are scheduled for one half-day a month for six months.

Information about next year's LeadershipDHHS will appear in future issues of DHHS Employee Update. ■

Bunny Drive was record-breaker

Year 15 of the department's annual Bunny Drive broke all previous records. DHHS divisions across Raleigh, along with N.C. Wildlife Resources folks, collected 1,622 bunnies, chicks and other furry critters for children who may need a little extra Easter cheer. The cuddly toys were distributed to the following facilities:

Wake Children's ER
Wake Pediatric Unit
Wake Rehab
Wake Children's Same Day Surgery
Tammy Lynn Center
Dix Hospital
Rex Rehab
Rex Pediatric Unit
Johnston Memorial Hospital
Western Wake Hospital
Magnolia Living Center
Liberty Commons Nursing and Rehab Center
Betsy Johnson Hospital
Duke Children's Hospital
Johnston County Highway Patrol
Johnston County Sheriff Dept.
Raleigh Rescue Mission
Raleigh Salvation Army

The Bunny Chick, who coordinates the drive, extends a sincere "thank you" to everyone who participated. ■



Are your home smoke alarms protecting you?

A couple of weeks ago, you changed your clocks to "spring forward." But, did you remember to check your smoke alarms? If you have a 9-volt battery-powered smoke alarm, you should change your batteries twice a year. It's easy to remember if you change the batteries when you change the time on your clocks.

Do you know you should test your smoke alarm EVERY month to make sure it stays in good working order?

Do you know that you should vacuum your smoke alarm regularly to keep it free of dust and debris? This keeps it in top condition for when you really need it.

Do you know that smoke alarms don't last forever? ALL types of smoke alarms need to be replaced every 10 years!



Do you know how many smoke alarms your home needs in order to adequately protect you and your family? Find the answer and more information on how to keep yourself and your family safe from fire on the National Fire Protection Association website, www.nfpa.org. ■

CFACs hold first statewide training seminars

The first Consumer and Family Advisory Committees (CFACs) Leadership Training seminar was held at the Hawthorne Inn and Conference Center in Winston-Salem Feb. 29-March 1. The training was attended by more than 250 participants from CFACs throughout the state. There were presentations from the Technical Assistance Collaborative, Division of Mental Health/Developmental Disabilities/Substance Abuse Services staff, Local Management Entity (LME) staff, and state and local CFACs on a wide variety of topics including quality management, recruitment, system financing, crisis services, housing, communication and relationship building, mergers and consumer and family involvement.

According to state Advocacy and Customer Service Chief Chris Phillips, the last session of the General Assembly allocated \$100,000 to provide training for Consumer and Family Advisory Committees statewide.

"These committees are statutorily mandated to advise Mental Health/Developmental Disabilities/Substance Abuse Services area authorities and county programs on the planning and management of the local public MH/DD/SAS services system," Phillips said. "The state CFAC is charged with advising the department and the General Assembly regarding the public MH/DD/SAS system. This generous allocation by

the legislature underscores the state's regard for the value of the perspective of consumers and family members and the necessity for this perspective in both local and statewide service system planning, implementation, management and oversight."

Phillips noted that the seminar gave CFAC members from across the state the opportunity to meet and interact as well as share information and knowledge. Phillips also reported that his group will hold nine regional CFAC training sessions throughout the state. These geographically accessible trainings will be attended by members from two or three CFACs and will use local data to improve the members' ability to provide input into the local service systems.

"Given the success of this training and its ultimately positive impact on our system of services from the input of CFACs, we hope that North Carolina will continue to wisely invest in ensuring future leadership and involvement of consumers and family members," he said.

The nine regional CFAC training sessions are being held March through June in Wilmington, Greenville, Fayetteville, Greensboro, Raleigh, Henderson, Lake Junaluska, Hickory and Charlotte. ■

CHANGES IN PAY INFORMATION!

BEACON

April 1, 2008

✓ Streamlined payroll and HR functions throughout state government

✓ Secure employee access and ability to:

record working time and submit leave requests online for certain divisions

make changes to benefits programs during enrollment periods

print pay stubs and W-2s

update personal information such as addresses and phone numbers



Talk to your HR office if you have questions or go to www.beacon.nc.gov

BEACON Checklist

April 1, 2008
Go Live!

- ✓ Ensure you have an active email address.
- ✓ Obtain an NCID and password at <https://ncid.nc.gov>
- ✓ Complete BEACON Overview training at www.beacon.nc.gov/training
- ✓ Complete Employee Self Service (ESS) training at: www.beacon.nc.gov/training
- ✓ Managers complete Manager Self Service (MSS) training at: www.beacon.nc.gov/training
- ✓ April 1, 2008, review your personal data in all ESS screens.
- ✓ After April 15, 2008, check your leave balances.
- ✓ Open any paper mail with the BEACON logo on it! It may be your ID card!

For general questions, call BEST Shared Services Center at 919-707-0707 or 866-622-3784.

BEACON is here, Authenticate Your Account!

April 1 is DHHS's go-live date in the BEACON HR/Payroll system.

Make sure you are prepared to start using the system...authenticate your account now and take BEACON's online training courses.

To access the BEACON portal, visit <https://mybeacon.nc.gov>.

After April 1, once you have authenticated your account you will be able to use the BEACON portal to:

- View pay statements
- Complete Benefits Annual Enrollment forms online
- Access and complete online time sheets
- View and change your personal information, including:
 - Home address
 - Dependent information
 - Bank account information.

For more information about the BEACON system and how to use the Employee Self Service (ESS), take the BEACON overview course and the two ESS courses (overview and time entry) online at www.beacon.nc.gov/training. Manager Self Service (MSS) training is also available on that site.

How to authenticate your account in the BEACON system:

On your first visit to the BEACON portal, you must authenticate your account.

To do this:

1. Log on using your NCID and password.
2. You will see a message that reads: "SAP ID Activation Required. Please activate your id now!"
3. Click on the word "activate" in the message.
4. On the new screen, enter your NCID and password again.
5. Click Start Activation button.
6. Enter your date of birth in the appropriate field.
7. Enter the last five digits of your SSN in the appropriate field.
8. Click Submit button.
9. You should see the message "Activation Success!"
10. Close your browser.
11. Open a new browser and go to <https://mybeacon.nc.gov>.
12. Log in using your NCID and password.
13. You will only need to enter your NCID and password on subsequent visits to the portal.

Note: If you experience problems authenticating your account, call the BEST (BEACON Enterprise Support Team) Shared Services Center anytime from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. Monday through Friday at 919-707-0707 if local to Raleigh, or 1-866-NCBEST4U statewide. ■

BEACON EMPLOYEE SELF SERVICE (ESS)

Take Easy Training

April 1 is the date that DHHS switches to BEACON, the state's updated human resource and payroll system. Be prepared to use this new service by taking the easy, web-based training. Visit the website at www.beacon.nc.gov/training/wbt/ess_menu.html and select your "Employee Self Service (ESS)" training. Follow the step-by-step instructions through an introduction of the services and benefits that are offered by the new BEACON system. You won't need a login or password to go through the ESS training.

Employee ID Number

In March, you should have received a card informing you of your Employee ID Number. Your 8-digit ID number and your name are printed on this punch-out card. On the back are the BEACON and N.C. Retirement System logos. **If you did not receive this card by the end of March, or if you lose this card, be sure to call BEST Shared Services at (919) 707-0707 or 1-866-622-3784 for a replacement.** From now on, you will use the ID number on your card instead of your Social Security number to identify your employee records.

You will also use your Employee ID number when you call the N.C. Retirement System support services at (919) 807-3050 or 1-877-627-3287.

Accessing Your Information Online

The first step to accessing your information online is to setup an NCID and password. Your NCID and password are not the same as your Employee ID. If you have not already done so, you can set up your NCID and password at <https://ncid.nc.gov>. If you have problems in this process, contact your local NCID administrator or the DHHS Customer Support Center at 919-855-3200.

Once you have set up your NCID and password, you can access Employee Self Service (ESS) at <https://mybeacon.nc.gov>. Just type in your NCID and password, go through the one-time authentication steps, and you're in! You can access your address, tax, and benefits information, among many other things. For a list of what you can change and what you may need help in editing, see the accompanying chart, "Updating Personal and Payroll Information in BEACON."

Also in April, many DHHS employees will be able to use Employee Self Service (ESS) to record their timesheet information – hours worked and leave taken. Contact your local Human Resources office to determine if you will be using ESS to enter your timesheet and leave requests.

Hours worked may be entered beginning April 1, but you will not be able to record any vacation or sick time you have taken until April 14, by which time your leave balances should be loaded into the system by the BEACON Project Team. BEACON recommends that you accurately record all of your timesheet information, including leave taken, as soon after that as possible to prepare for the end of month payroll activities. Soon after April 1, you are encouraged to check your account information for accuracy by logging into BEACON using your NCID and password.

Need Help?

If you have specific questions or concerns about agency policies and procedures or your personal information (such as life and health insurance), please consult with your supervisor or contact your local HR office. You may get the HR office telephone or office address by asking your supervisor or referencing a facility/division directory.

Some DHHS employees do not have access to computers or to email. If you would like information on email accounts and access to a computer, please contact your local HR office. ■

Updating personal and payroll information in BEACON

DHHS employees still need to work with their supervisors and local Human Resources (HR) office to make changes to certain personal and payroll information, but most updates can be made directly by the employees through the online BEACON system or by calling, emailing or faxing BEST Shared Services. Some features will not be available until after April 14.

The chart below shows which services employees can update independently through Employee Self Service (ESS) or BEST Shared Services (BEST) and which are still managed by Agency HR. If you do not have access to a computer or to email, contact your local HR office.

As a reminder, timekeeping related

questions can also be addressed to your Division/Facility/School BEACON Timekeeper or HR Office.

BEST Shared Services:

BEST@ncosc.net

919-707-0707 (Local Phone)

866-NCBEST4U (Statewide Phone)
(866-622-3784)

919.855.6861 (FAX)

Type of information	To view	To initiate change, correct or request information
Personal		
Legal Name	ESS	Agency HR
Employee ID Number	ESS	--
Birth Date	--	Agency HR
Home Address	ESS	ESS, BEST, Agency HR
Mailing Address	ESS	ESS, BEST, Agency HR
Tax Withholding (W4)	ESS	ESS, BEST, Agency HR
Home Phone	ESS	ESS, BEST, Agency HR
Spouse	ESS	ESS, BEST, Agency HR
Spouse's Social Security Number	ESS	ESS, BEST, Agency HR
Emergency Contact	ESS	ESS, BEST, Agency HR
Formal Education	--	Agency HR
Bank Information	ESS	ESS, BEST, Agency HR
Payroll		
Employment Verification	--	BEST
Salary Verification	--	BEST
Pay Statement	ESS	--
Time Entry and Approval		
Hours Worked	ESS	--
Enter Time	ESS	ESS/Agency Timekeepers
Request Leave	ESS	ESS/Your Supervisor
Available Leave	ESS	Agency HR
Benefits (Statewide Plans Only)		
Plan Participation	ESS	ESS, BEST, Agency HR
Link to Plan Details	ESS	ESS, BEST, Agency HR
Coverage Levels	ESS	ESS, BEST, Agency HR
Beneficiaries	ESS	ESS, Agency HR
Life Changing Event	ESS	ESS and Agency HR

DHHS WELLNESS INITIATIVE

April Wellness Column

Some of the infomercials for fitness equipment are hard to resist. "Lose three inches in 30 days...visible results in only a few weeks". Even more tempting is when the ads promise that amazing results can be achieved while relaxing in front of the TV using a small piece of fitness equipment for only minutes a day. But, before calling the toll-free number to order one of these gadgets, you might want to read the report on testing of exercise devices in the February 2008 issue of Consumer Reports.

The magazine tested exercise devices ranging in cost from \$50 to \$300 promoted through infomercials. While acknowledging that any piece of home equipment that might motivate someone to exercise more may have some value, the article noted that, in most cases, people can receive the same or better results by exercises that don't require these exercise gadgets.

Some of the infomercials promise significant and quick weight loss from using their equipment, but any weight loss is more likely to be due to following the diet plan recommended by the manufacturer rather than by using the machine alone. Some types of home exercise equipment do help with muscle toning, but healthy weight loss requires reducing calorie intake and increasing regular aerobic exercise. Most of the advertised exercise equipment does not produce an aerobic workout.

The article also cautions us to consider the total cost of some of the exercise equipment promoted on TV.

Shipping charges can significantly increase the cost of the equipment, and a money-back guarantee may mean that you have to pay shipping to return the item. Many of the items were found to have cheap parts that broke, and there were consumer complaints related to problems when trying to return equipment.

There are many lower priced and free alternatives for personal fitness.

Walking is still the least expensive and best way to get the recommended minimum 30 minutes of exercise a day. Wearing a pedometer can help keep us motivated to keep walking. Walking with a friend at work can help even more, since it makes the time go more quickly and keeps us committed to a regular routine. If walking outdoors is not possible, walk indoors and use the stairs whenever possible.

Exercise bands, small weights, fitness balls, jump ropes and exercise DVDs are all inexpensive items that can help with home or work fitness programs. They are also available at local stores, which means no shipping charges.

The most important key to getting more exercise is finding an exercise routine that you enjoy and keep doing it.

Suzanna Young
DHHS Wellness Director

Adoption Profile

Introducing AJ...

AJ is described as a polite, talkative and lovable boy who is wise beyond his years. He always kisses his foster parents goodnight and tells them he loves them. AJ enjoys playing the violin, playing cowboys, watching movies and drawing. He thinks he'd like to join the Coast Guard someday or become an architect.

AJ is a very intelligent child and attends regular classes at school. His favorite subject is forensic science. AJ is working on improving some minor behaviors.



AJ, b. December 14, 1993

A Family for AJ...

AJ is eager to be adopted and have parents he can call mom and dad, so it is important to him to have a two-parent family. He hopes they will be caring, loving, and provide him with structure and stability. AJ will benefit from parents who will spend time with him as he continues to develop socially, academically, spiritually and physically.

For more information on this child or adoption and foster care in general, call NC Kids Adoption and Foster Care Network toll-free at 1-877-NCKIDS-1 (1-877-625-4371). Network toll-free at 1-877-NCKIDS-1 (1-877-625-4371).

